The Future Toys in Education

After looking over the Horizon Report, I think that if all of this can happen in the classroom then education will be nothing like what we have experienced before. I personally believe that a few of these ideas are a little far-fetched but I also thought that having high-speed internet in the palm of my hands without wires was not possible either. The Horizon Report discusses six topics: cloud computing, collaborative environments, game based learning, mobiles, augmented reality, and flexible displays. In the classroom, teachers may be using some of these items today but some may be a few years down the road for education.

First item I will discuss is cloud computing. Cloud computing can be used by districts to cut costs by hosting their own servers and storage spaces by using storage spaces on the web instead of their own personal buildings. This is already being used today in some instances by having all reports, information schools need such as grades, and attendance saved on a web based program. TeacherTube is another popular example of cloud computing. Teachers, students and others with interests in education can create videos to further explain concepts.

Another topic was collaborative environments, which allows people to meet in a virtual community to discuss ideas. This is already being used in sites such as Promethean Planet which uses a forum for educators to discuss ideas that they have and share what has worked for them in the classroom or professional development they have seen. In the classroom students can use blogs and wikis to collaborate on topics or even form study groups to gain further knowledge of the topic. Another possible use could be to invite experts on the topic to allow questioning by students.

Game based learning is another idea presented but I am not sure about the implementation of this in the education world. I think in the high school or even middle school level that by integrating games into learning will be too cheesy for students to want to participate in. I see game based learning being used in the elementary level to gain a sturdy foundation of knowledge and to keep students engaged in learning.

A huge topic I feel that will play a major role in education is the use of mobile phones in education. Students are constantly wanting to interact with each other through their cell phones and it will be a matter of time that schools accept this powerful tool. There are also sites out there, such as PollEverywhere, that allows students to send in answers to a central site that can be viewed in class.

The final two topics I think are out there as far as use in the classroom. Augmented reality is basically when you take an object and make it and interactive 3D overlap onto a virtual or something that exist in the real world. I looked into an augmented reality, Scimorph. That allows students to take a virtual object and have it interact in real life events. The possibilities can allow students to walk through places they have never been before without leaving their own homes.

The final topic addressed is flexible displays. This is a topic that I know very little about but it seems that it is still in the developmental stage. The impression I received was that like a Kindle, it uses a very small amount if energy but can also be fitted to a curved surface to bring displays to life. Items, such as textbooks, could be molded to a notebook and carried around easily and the upkeep costs could be beneficial and manageable to districts as energy costs continue to rise. Arizona State University President Dr. Crow discussed the potential of flexible displays in the YouTube video “Flexible Displays’ Channel”.

In closing the challenges and changes can have a huge impact on education but it is hard to say that something is impossible, technology and minds will not allow it.

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